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ABSTRACT

A study examined the nature of school culture information found in symbolic pictures of schools. One specific goal was to determine the nature of school culture information embedded in verbal interpretations of symbolic school drawings and the accuracy of reviewers' interpretations of the drawings. Another goal was to compare information from the symbolic pictures with other forms of school culture data. Two data sets from six schools (three high schools, one middle school, one combination elementary-middle school, and one elementary school located in the Northwest, Southwest, and Northeast areas of the United States) were analyzed. The first set involved analysis of symbolic pictures drawn by faculty, students, and parents and of verbal interpretations of those pictures by a panel of three reviewers. The second set consisted of student and teacher responses to school culture questionnaires and interviews regarding their schools' cultures. Using interpretive and functional paradigms, symbols were classified into six components of school culture. Findings indicate that the drawings communicated areas of school culture that school members saw as having meaning and importance--cultural leadership, student membership, and environmental support. Data regarding the accuracy of the panel's interpretations were inconclusive. Components of school culture that received low ratings in the formal school reports--cultural leadership, student membership, and environmental support--had a high frequency of interpretation among drawers and reviewers. Eight tables are included. (17 references) (LMI)

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SEEING WHAT WE THINK: SYMBOLS OF SCHOOL CULTURE

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"Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the fairest of us all?" Like the wicked queen in the story of Snow White, those educators who want to know about themselves and their organizations look at reflections of their social milieus to find the answers. But, often, they appear unable to read what is contained in those mirrorlike reflections. The reflections appear to consist of symbols. Symbols, like the faces in mirrors, are reflections of the cultures of organizations. Research tells us that symbols can aid in understanding the nature of organizational cultures (Deal, 1985; Peters & Austin, 1985; Deal & Kennedy, 1985; Jung, 1964). Is it possible that reflective pictures of school symbols can allow one to identify the important ceremonies, rituals, events, and so on that give life meaning in schools?

The purpose of this paper is to report findings regarding the nature of school culture information found in symbolic pictures of schools. The symbolic pictures were drawn on large sheets of newspaper print by faculty and students from elementary, middle, and high schools during school improvement projects. The paper briefly describes the theoretical framework for the study and the context in which the drawing of symbolic pictures occurred. The paper also describes the data collection methodology, the data collected, the methods of analysis, and the findings. The paper concludes with recommendations for collecting, interpreting, and using the data from symbolic pictures to assist in planning for school restructuring.

Purposes of Study

One purpose of this study was to determine the nature of school culture information embedded in verbal interpretations of symbolic drawings of schools. A second purpose was to determine the extent to which the reviewer's verbal intepretations accurately reflected the school members' intent. A third aim was to assess the differences and similarities between the interpretative data of symbolic pictures and other forms of comparative school culture data.

Theoretical Framework

The perspectives used to understand culture and the symbolic pictures are derived from research and writings on the nature of organizational culture and symbols as described by Deal (1987), Burrell & Morgan (1979), Fullan (1982), Furtwengler (1985), Schein (1986), Morgan, Frost and Pondy (1983), Senge (1990), and Upton (1987).

Senge (1990) and Furtwengler (1990) suggest that high-performing organizations, such as effective schools, are learning organizations which continually change as their environments are altered. Leadership in effective schools begins with the principle of creative tension. This tension exists between the faculty's vision of what could be and their perceptions of the"current reality" (Senge, 1990, p. 9). Leadership should help faculty members, students, and parents bring their visions, perceptions of reality, and creative

tensions to the surface for discussion. Speaking about these visions, realities, and tensions increases the intensity and clarity of each. Once these elements are sufficiently intensified and clarified, the school's teachers, students, and parents may then choose to reduce the creative tension that exists between the visions and perceptions of reality. Reducing the creative tension usually requires changes in the cultural elements which support existing realities (Senge, 1990, p. 12). Leadership, then, provides opportunities for teachers, students, and parents to deal effectively with creative tension by identifying, clarifying, and changing the cultural elements existing in the school organization.

Burrell and Morgan (1979) suggest the use of four paradigms for studying symbolism in organizations. Two of the four paradigms, known as "interpretive" and "functional," appear to be useful for analyzing the symbolic representations of a school's culture. The interpretive paradigm considers all forms of symbolic activity as a form of language. It helps to answer the question: What is the symbolic language or medium through which teachers and students create their world? The functional paradigm views symbols as carriers of information and meaning. This paradigm helps to answer the question: What meaning and significance are embedded in the different symbols and the patterns involving those symbols? (Morgan, Frost & Pondy, 1983, p. 22). School cultural activities (such as ceremonies, rituals, norms, and stories) represented by symbols in pictures (the "language") convey information and provide meaning to those in the school organization. In this study, both the interpretative and functional paradigms are used to analyze the symbolic pictures.

Data Sets

Two previous AERA papers (Furtwengler, 1988, 1989) reported research findings from 36 schools regarding a unique strategy for school improvement implementation that involved (1) a comprehensive culture-assessment process and (2) the participation of informal and formal student leaders. The 1988 paper described results of those implementations, the extent to which institutionalization of the process occurred in the 36 schools, and the conditions that prohibited or enhanced the implementation of the process for creating and maintaining effective schools.

During the implementation of school improvement in these 36 schools, two sets of data were collected. The first set consisted of the faculties' and students' symbolic drawings of their schools and the authors' field notes recorded when those school members described their drawings. A second data set contained responses by students and teachers to school culture questionnaires and to interview questions regarding the school's culture. These responses were analyzed and provided to each school in a report format. Five sets of symbolic pictures and five school reports were identified for use in this study. The remaining school data sets were not complete and were excluded from the study. Of the schools included in this study, three were high schools, one was a middle school, one was

a combination elementary and middle school, and one was a elementary school. The schools are located in the Midwest, Southeast, and Northeast areas of the United States.

To conduct this study, additional data were collected from a panel of reviewers. These data included recorded interview responses from three individuals selected to review each picture and to provide verbal descriptions of their intepretation of each picture. The three persons, all of whom were unfamiliar with the schools represented in the symbolic pictures, included a school principal, a secondary school student, and a science teacher. These reviewers were selected for the following reasons:

1) All have had experiences in educational/school settings.
2) All view education/school from different perspectives.

This study scheduled for completion July 1, 1991, will include reviews from at least two more reviewers.

Data Collection Methods

The authors collected the symbolic pictures drawn by the faculty, students, and parents from the five schools involved in this study effort. All of the drawings were completed during school retreats held in an environment away from the school sites. The purpose for this activity was to intensify and clarify "current realities," in Senge's terms. A second purpose was to create a common language, to "make thought visible," and to identify cultural agreements and their existing relationships which support "current realities."

Participants at the retreats were students, faculty members, and parents, with the exception of the elementary school which involved only the faculty. The number of students at each retreat varied from 30 to 65. Students were selected to attend the retreat because they were viewed by teachers as either formal or informal leaders in the school. Faculty members who attended the retreat either were volunteers or were asked to attend by their respective principals. The majority of elementary school faculty members attended their retreat. At the other retreats, the student-to-faculty ratio was about 5 or 6 to 1. The participating students, teachers, and parents were divided at random into small groups. Each group was given one or more large sheets of paper and drawing materials. The groups were instructed to draw a symbolic picture of their school. The instructions included the following: 1) avoid the use of written words if possible; 2) describe your school, what is happening, and/or how you feel about your school; and 3) be honest.

After brainstorming within their groups about their perceptions of their school, the members of each group created a picture. This small-group process involved four basic steps: 1) discussing mental images of their schools; 2) brainstorming how to organize the drawing of the images; 3) drawing the picture(s); and 4) explaining the group's picture to members of the other groups. The symbolic respresentation provided a visual anchor for further discussion during the retreat and for learning about how each individual group

viewed its school.

Prior to the retreat, each school had formed a planning team that assisted in coordinating the collection of questionnaire and interview data from students and teachers. The authors served as consultants to these schools and used the combined data to develop a report regarding the school's existing culture. The report was validated by each school's planning team before the report was shared with the faculty. Quantitative and qualitative school culture data were combined and used to rate the eight school culture constructs covered in these reports (Furtwengler, 1990).

Three reviewers were contacted and the nature of the research was described to each of them. They were asked if they would be willing to review the sets of symbolic pictures. All three agreed to participate in the study. Each reviewer was given the following information and instructions:

Preparatory Information:

1) These are pictures drawn by students and teachers in elementary, middle, and high schools.
2) We are interested in what you can tell us about each school and its culture.

Questions:

Please use the following questions as guides as you verbally convey your perceptions of the individual schools and their cultures.

1) What do you see?
2) Are there themes that recur as you review the drawings from one school?
3) Are there generalizations you can make about each school?
4) What are your overall perceptions about the school and its culture?

Each of the three reviewers gave verbal descriptions of three of the five schools based solely on their review of the pictures drawn by representatives of each school. The interviewees' responses were tape recorded for review and analysis.

Methods of Analysis and Findings

One purpose of this study was to determine the nature of school culture information embedded in reviewers' verbal interpretations of symbolic drawings of schools. The nature of the of the school culture information reflected in the symbolic pictures was determined through two interpretive perspectives. The authors of this study decided to analyze the drawings and to describe the school culture reflected in each. To accomplish this task each drawing was viewed both as a "whole" entity and as consisting of several symbols. The aim was to grasp the perceived reality of the organizational culture from a broad as well as a detailed perspective. In this regard, we first determined the nature of the symbols used in each picture. These symbols were classified into seven categories. The symbol categories defined by the researchers included

the following: 1) Academics, 2) Parents and/or community, 3) Student life, 4) Athletics and extra-curricular activities, 5) Drugs and alcohol, 6) Administration and authority, and 7) Abstract diagrams. The symbols in the pictures were then assigned to a specific category as follows:

Academics included pictures of:

books, formulas, pencils, desks, classrooms, words, science equipment, words, tables, library shelves, computers, math equations, and vocational references such as combs, scissors, wood, metal, shop materials, and so on.

Parents and/or community included pictures of:

houses, tractors, factories, community buildings, banks, churches, the town, raindrops as a metaphor, and stick figures.

Student life included pictures of:

lockers, stick figures doing things, smiling faces, frowning faces, figures holding hands, clothing items such as boots and dresses, kids sleeping, cheerleaders, sports participants, circles with eyes, food, trash, papers, cafeteria, desks, parking lots, cars, buses, school buildings, clubs, honor societies, organizations, dances, parties, games, and playgrounds.

Athletics and extra-curricular activities included pictures of:

sports fields, stadiums, gymnasiums, field houses, footballs, basketballs, soccer balls, basketball hoops, hockey sticks, swimming equipment, baseballs, baseball bats, shoes-tennis, golf, track, goal posts, megaphones, cheerleaders, football players, basketball players, skills, tennis rackets, golf clubs, mascots, pom-poms, music notes, treble clef, bass clef, music staff, choir member singing, instruments, stage, thespian references, trophies, banners, the word "spirit," art palette, paint brushes, and school colors.

Drug and alcohol included pictures of:

reefers, marijuana plants, beer cans, pills, cigarettes, people smoking or drinking.

Administration and authority: included pictures of:

charactatures of principals, just a hand or arm grabbing a student, giant eyes, stick figures with or without halos, paddles, judge robes, smiling faces, angry faces, and other metaphors like an umbrella to protect the school.

Abstract diagrams: included pictures of:

classrooms, school buildings, grounds around the facilities, design of buildings, webs or sociograms, traditional school house, pie graphs, and so on.

The purpose for this interpretive review was to grasp the perceived reality of the organizational culture as expressed by the school members. Our first step was to attempt to assess the extent to which the symbols represented problems or issues of concern to the school members. The assessment was based on the context in which the symbols appeared,

the size of the drawings, the frequency of symbol use, and the field notes recorded from the school members' verbal descriptions. Those symbols that represented a problem or concern were identified within each of these six categories. Table I shows the symbol categories ordered by the frequency with which the various symbols appeared in the 52 pictures. Table I also shows the number and percentage of symbols that represented concerns in each particular category.

TABLE I

Appearance of Symbols in School Drawings by Number, Frequency, and Concern for Each Category

Categories of Symbols	Total	%	Concern	%
Athletics & Extra	51	98	7	13
Student Life	51	98	36	69
Academics	25	48	21	40
Abstract Diagrams	25	48	4	8
Administration/Auth	16	31	9	17
Parents/Community	15	29	6	12
Alcohol/Drugs	11	21	11	21

These data show that each of 51 pictures have at least one symbol representing athletics and at least one symbol representing extra-curricular activities. These data also show that each of 36 pictures have at least one symbol representing concerns for student life.

The study also determined the extent to which reviewers' verbal interpretations of the pictures accurately reflected the school members' interpretations of the pictures. The method of analysis for making this determination required an analysis of the three reviewer' interpretations of the drawings. Tape-recordings of the three reviewers' descriptions of the drawings were transcribed for analysis. The interviewees' responses for each school were analyzed to determine the major themes. This analysis lead to the creatioin of seven theme categories: Problems and issues, Athletics and extra-curricular activities, Academics, Student life, Administration and authority, School mission, and Parents and community. Each specific interpretation item contained in the interviewees' responses was then listed under its appropriate theme category. Those items that reflected concern by school members were identified and marked with asterisks. The authors also categorized their interpretations into the thematic categories identified by the reviewers. Those items that reflected concern by school members also were identified and designated with asterisks.

The lists of the reviewers specific interpretations were compared with those of the researchers. The reviewers' reading accuracy was based on the number of interpretations

correctly identified from the researchers' lists of interpretations. Table II, Reviewer's Reading Accuracy, shows the percent of the reviewer's interpretations which were correctly identified.

TABLE II

Reviewers' Reading Accuracy

	Schools				
	A	B	C	D	E
Reviewers:					
Principal	60%	75%	78%	62%	52%
Teacher	55%	71%	17%*	*	*
Student	25%	33%	33%	46%	30%

*the teacher did not complete the readings.

As these data show, the principal and the teacher correctly identified more of the messages associated with the symbols and pictures than did the student reviewer. The principal's percent of correctly identified areas ranged from a low of 52% in school E to a high of 78% in school C. In this limited study the teacher only read two schools and the third school, school C, was reviewed with general rather than specific comments. The teacher correctly identified 55% of the areas for school A and 71% of the areas for school B. The student's percent of correctly identified areas ranged from a low of 25% for school A to a high of 46% for school D.

Two of the reviewers misinterpreted the school members' intents. The principal misread one interpretation and the teacher misread two interpretations. The student did not misinterpret any of the symbols and pictures, but the person did not correctly identify as many interpretations.

The study also determined the differences and similarities between the reviewers' interpretative data of symbolic pictures and other forms of comparative school culture data. Interview and questionnaire response data were combined to provide formal ratings for each of the six components of school culture identified in the literature (Purkey & Smith, 1983; Furtwengler, 1988). The six components of culture and their definitions are as follows:

Cultural leadership is defined as the communication of the school's mission and vision that emphasizes teaching and learning and an ongoing process to monitor progress and implement changes as needed to improve and achieve school goals. The construct of cultural managment includes the following subcategories or factors: instructional leadership, support for problem-solving, consistency/order enforcement, role clarity, sense of community, and recognition of success.

Quality ethic is the shared faculty commitment to achieving the goals of the school

and to change, growth, and constant improvement.

Environmental support is the general and continuous support for the learning activities in the school provided by the school facilities, the existing school order, and the level of people-to-people caring.

Student membership is the existence of the students' sense of being a member of the school organization.

Collaborative problem-solving is the school's ongoing problem-solving process that involves teams of students, parents, teachers, and administrators.

Personal and professional self-worth is the teachers' belief that they are respected by their colleagues, treated as equals among their colleagues, and consulted before decisions are made and actions taken (Furtwengler, 1991).

Before the comparisons between the data sets could be completed, each of the reviewers' specific interpretation categories was assessed to determine the components of school culture reflected by or related to each of the categories. Table III shows the culture components viewed by the authors as reflected by and related to the reviewers' categories of symbolic interpretations.

TABLE III

School Culture Components Related to Reviewers' Categories of Symbols

Reviewers' Symbol Category	Related Culture Component
Athletics and extra curricular	Cultural leadership Quality ethic Student membership
Student Life	Cultural leadership Quality ethic Student membership Environmental support
Academics	Cultural leadership Quality ethic Environmental support Student membership Personal and professional self-worth
Abstract Diagrams	Environmental support

Administration and Authority	Cultural leadership Quality ethic Collaborative problem solving Personal and professional self-worth
Parents and/or Community	Quality ethic Environmental support
Alcohol and Drugs	Cultural leadership Student membership

As these data show, some of the reviewers' interpretive categories, such as athletics, student life, and academics, were viewed as being reflected by or related to several school culture components.

The authors' specific interpretations of the school members drawings and verbal descriptions were expressed as items of importance. Some of these items were viewed as concerns. The number of items were categorized into each of the major theme categories (Athletics, Academics, and so on) for each school. These data were summed. The total number of items in each of these categories were listed in each of their related school culture components. For example, if the number of items identified by the reviewers was 4 in the athletics category then the number 4 was listed in each of the school cultural components reflected by or related to the athletics category. The items listed in each of the school culture components were summed. These results appear in Table IV, which shows the distribution of items among the school culture components for each school.

TABLE IV
School Members' Frequency of Items Distributed
Among the Components of School Culture

	Number of Symbols Identified for Each School				
	A	B	C	D	E
Components:					
Cultural Leadership	19	22	18	13	25
Quality Ethic	9	10	9	5	13
Student Membership	17	20	18	3	20
Environmental Support	18	20	18	5	18
Collaborative Problem-S.	1	4	0	8	3
Personal &P. Self-worth	5	5	1	7	6

These data show that the nature of school culture apparent in the symbolic pictures, as interpreted by the authors, is reflected primarily in the components of cultural leadership, quality ethic, student membership, and environmental support. The remaining two components of collaborative problem-solving and personal and professional self-worth were of relatively minor importance in reflecting concerns about school.

Next we reviewed each school's ratings (from school reports based on questionnaire and interview data) for those components of school culture that school members viewed as concerns, problems, or issues. In Table V, Low Ratings of School Culture, those ratings

TABLE V

Low Ratings of School Culture

	Schools				
	A	B	C	D	E
Components:					
Cultural Leadership		*	*	*	*
Quality Ethic	*		*		*
Student Membership		*	*		*
Environmental Support			*		*
Collaborative Problem-S.	*		*	*	*
Personal &P. Self-worth			*	*	

which showed concern for particular culture components are identified with asterisks. As these data show, the four school culture components frequently rated low were cultural leadership, quality ethic, student membership, and collaborative problem-solving.

The study also determined the differences and similarities between the reviewers' interpretative data of symbolic pictures and other forms of comparative school culture data. Reviewers' specific interpretations expressed as concerns were identified and labeled. The concerns expressed by the reviewers in each of the major theme categories (Athletics, Academics, and so on) for each school were summed. These concerns in each of the reviewers' categories were listed as concerns in each of their related school culture components. For example, if 10 concerns were identified by the reviewers in the athletics category, then 10 concerns were listed in each of the school cultural components reflected by or related to the athletics category. The concerns listed in each of the school culture component were summed. The total number of concerns across all school culture components was used to determine the percent of concerns for each of the school's cultural components. Table VI shows the percent distribution of concerns identified and categorized in each of the school culture component categories.

TABLE VI
Distribution of Reviewers' Concerns Among
Components of School Culture

	Percent of Concerns Identified for Each School				
	A	B	C	D*	E*
Components:					
Cultural Leadership	36	36	39	33	31
Quality Ethic	10	10	0	14	13
Student Membership	32	24	28	14	27
Environmental Support	19	17	31	19	22
Collaborative Problem-S.	3	12	3	10	2
Personal & P. Self-worth	0	0	0	10	4

* percentages based on two reviewers' responses.

As these data show, the three school culture components most frequently identified by the reviewers as concerns were cultural leadership, student membership, and environmental support. Comparisons between the low school ratings and the concerns listed in each of the school culture components will be shown in Table VIII.

Differences and similarities between the reviewers' interpretative data of symbolic pictures and the authors' interpretative data also were determined. The authors' specific interpretations expressed as concerns were identified and labeled using the same procedures as were followed in identifying and labeling the reviewers' interpretations. The authors' concerns in each of the major theme categories (Athletics, Academics, and so on) for each school were summed. These concerns were listed as concerns in each of the school culture components. The concerns listed in each of the school culture component were summed. The total number of concerns across all school culture components was used to determine the percent of concerns for each of the school's cultural components. Table VII shows the percent distribution of concerns identified within each of the school culture component.

TABLE VII
Distribution of School Members' Concerns Among Components of School Culture

	Percent of Concerns Identified for Each School				
	A	B	C	D*	E*
Components:					
Cultural Leadership	32	31	31	30	31
Quality Ethic	8	3	7	0	13
Student Membership	26	29	31	10	27
Environmental Support	24	23	28	20	17
Collaborative Problem-S.	3	11	0	20	6
Personal & P. Self-worth	6	3	3	20	6

* percentages based on two reviewers' responses.

As these data show, the three school culture components most frequently identified by the school members as concerns (as interpreted by the authors) were cultural leadership, student membership, and environmental support. The researchers believed that low ratings of school culture components developed from questionnaire and interview data would generally correlate with the a high frequency of concerns found in the interpretations of the reviewers and the authors regarding those culture components.

Finally, the similarities and dissimilarites among the schools' low ratings, the reviewers' concerns, and the authors' concerns, were analyzed. Table VIII provides a graphic depiction of the low ratings and interpretive data of concerns as read by the reviewers and authors.

TABLE VIII

Graphic Comparison of the School Culture Components:
Low Ratings, Reviewers' Concerns, and Authors' Concerns

	Low Rating/High Concern for Each School				
	A	B	C	D	E
Components:					
Cultural Leadership	+•	*+•	*+•	*+•	*+•
Quality Ethic	*		*		*
Student Membership	+•	*+•	*+•		*+•
Environmental Support	+•	•	*+•	+•	*+
Collaborative Problem-S.	*		*	* •	*
Personal & P. Self-worth			*	* •	

* means low rating of school culture.
\+ means high % of reviewers' concern, 19% or above.
• means high % of authors' concern, 19% or above.

These graphic data show that the ratings and interpretations for the two components of cultural leadership and student membership were in close agreement. The data also show that the ratings and interpretations for quality ethic, environmental support, collaborative problem-solving, personal and professional self-worth were not in close agreement.

Several additional notes of interest were gleaned from the comparative analysis of the reviewers' transcripts and the authors' analysis. First, the reviewers were unable to identify the forms of problem-solving practices that existed in the schools. The school members' intent, in some instances, was to communicate the nature of their problem-solving approaches.

Second, in School C, the reviewers were able to identify the confusion and distrac-

tions that seemed to exist in the culture and the school members' desires to work together to succeed. They were unable to identify the severe divisions existing among the students and between the students and the faculty and administration.

Third, the mission of the schools was frequently identified by the reviewers as what seemed to be most important to the school members who created the drawings. Athletics and extra-curricular activities were dominant influences in the schools reported the reviewers.

Summary and Findings

This research endeavor is in an early stages of development. The findings are preliminary and will likely be changed as this study continues and new findings emerge.

This exploratory study was designed to answer three questions. First, what was the nature of school cultural information in the drawings created by school members? Second, to what extent was it possible for reviewers to understand the intended messages of the school members' symbolic pictures? Lastly, what differences and similarities existed between the reviewers' interpretative data of symbolic pictures and other forms of comparative school culture data?

What was the nature of school cultural information in the symbolic drawings? The authors, in this study of symbolic pictures, utlilized two of the four paradigms that Burrell and Morgan (1979) suggested for studying symbolism in organizations. Their functionalist and interpretive paradigms were selected for use in this study because the authors were interested in discovering the symbols used to represent school ceremonies, rituals, norms, and stories and how the language of symbolic drawings reflects the school culture. The symbols that school members choose reflected their perceptions of the school culture, such as athletics and extra-curricular activities, friends and cliques, school food, use of alcohol and drugs, and their personal space within the organizational structure. Seeing the symbols all at once, we attained a holistic view of the synergistic and interactive culture. This medium provided a communication tool for the reviewers, authors, and school members. The drawings communicated those facets that school members saw as having meaning and importance in the culture and the important issues or problems that were of concern. The majority of the school culture component data available in the symbolic pictures reflected the status of cultural leadership, student membership, and environmental support. The other three components--quality ethic, collaborative problem-solving, personal and professional self-worth--were not as well represented by data in the symbolic pictures. One of many possible explanations for the absence of the symbolic messages in these areas may have been the lack of importance or of meaning found among school members for these components of school culture.

The school cultures depicted in the symbolic pictures suggested that school mem-

bers are commited to a mission that focuses on achieving objectives outside the academic areas. It appears as though collaborative problem-solving and the presence of a quality ethic are not important to most of the school members in these schools. Lastly, the nature of the school culture information in the symbolic pictures suggests that school members who draw pictures find it easier to communicate issues relating to cultural leadership, student membership, and environmental support than some of the other aspects of school culture.

The small sample used in this study to date limits the conclusions we can draw about the symbols, meaning, importance, and issues most school members' might include in their symbolic drawings of schools. We have been working with the drawing of such pictures for 12 years. The symbols and pictures interpretated in this sample are typical of those drawn by other school members from more than 100 schools. Study is underway to extend this exploration and to understand the findings.

To what extent is it possible for a person(s) to understand the intended messages of the school members' symbolic pictures? From a comparative analysis of the reviewers' interview data and the intended interpretations of the school members it was determined that the principal and probably the teacher identified more items correctly than did the student. However, the student did not misread any of the interpretations, and both the teacher and the principal misread several intended interpretations. Again, the limited number of reviewers precludes making any generalized conclusions at this time in the study.

What differences and similarities exist among the reviewers' interpretative data of symbolic pictures and other forms of comparative school culture data? The ratings from formal school study reports were used to identify school culture components which were rated as low for these schools. Interpretations of the school members' intent by the authors and by the reviewers were the other data sets used to answer this question. The data supported our contention that problems and issues of concern regarding the schools' culture would appear as low ratings on school reports and as a high frequency of interpretations among reviewers and the authors. This support was limited to the school culture components of cultural leadership, student membership, and environmental support. Much more research is needed before this question is fully answered.

Some of the questions raised by the preliminary findings from this research include the following: Can principals, as experts, read from the pictures up to 75% of the intended messages drawn as symbolic pictures? Do the important symbols and holistic pictures really represent the mission and vision to which school members are committed? Are researchers focusing on the important or emerging components of school culture? Is it possible to view symbolic interpretations as reflecting all aspects of school culture components?

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